3/30/20

Dear CGESD Families,

This morning, Arizona Governor Doug Ducey and Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman announced the extension of Arizona school closures through the end of this school year. The extension follows updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and an announcement from the White House extending physical distancing guidelines until April 30, 2020. The Governor’s announcement means that the remainder of the school year in the Casa Grande Elementary School District will not occur in a traditional school environment that brings large numbers of students and staff together in one location.

I know the closure of school as we know it presents a hardship for many of our families. It also has a social and emotional impact on many of our students. I want you to know that while our teachers, leaders, and staff are saddened by this announcement, we also want to ensure we are all doing our part to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The announcement today likely raises a lot of questions for you. It does for our CGESD team too. Many district leaders have been working for the past several weeks in order to work out answers to all of these questions. Things change quickly, and we are doing our best to be flexible and make decisions in the moment. We appreciate your flexibility and patience as well.

Here’s what we know today:

- School buildings will continue to be closed for traditional classes throughout the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. *Learning will continue, but it will look different.* It is important for you to understand that while school will look different, learning needs to continue. CGESD is working with our teachers to provide flexible learning plans that can be accessed online or through paper-pencil packet learning. The learning packets you received today, either by picking them up in the drive-up lane at school, or by downloading them from our website, are temporary learning tools. Over the next two weeks, you will begin to see assignments from your child’s teachers. It is important that you check phone messages and emails to ensure you know what is expected.

- Spring events and athletics have all been cancelled. The most common questions we have received have been about awards events, spring athletics, and promotion ceremonies. The Governor’s order
means that these springtime traditions will NOT occur as scheduled. I know how important this time is for our students and their families, and I’m sorry that your students will not get the opportunities they have been looking forward to. As we plan for the future, we will talk about how we will celebrate the accomplishments of our students in an appropriate manner.

- Students will still be able to matriculate to the next grade level. I will be working with our State Board of Education, the Arizona Department of Education, and our CGESD Governing Board to determine what needs to be done in order to make sure our teachers are prepared to help ‘catch students up’ when school resumes.

- Meals for students will continue. We will continue to provide breakfast and lunch to students through the remainder of the school year. Many of you may have heard we are now providing a Saturday breakfast and lunch with meal pick-ups on Fridays. We will likely continue to expand our offerings and meal distribution locations to more sites as the demand increases. Please remember these grab-and go-meals are available at no cost to children 18 and under.

Our team will continue to provide you with updates as we work our way through what is truly uncharted territory. Families will receive official messages through School Messenger and on the district web site. Please continue to remain engaged in order to receive critical information and updates as soon as they are available. I know this is a time of great uncertainty, which can be especially challenging for children who are used to the routine of the school year. Everyone involved – from state officials to our county health partners to the leaders within our school district – is working intently to do what is right and best for children and our community. There are no easy decisions, only decisions that we believe are best for the safety and health of our students, staff, and community.

I commit to continue keeping you informed as decisions are made that impact the work of CGESD. Please know we love and miss our CGESD students tremendously, and will be available via phone and online sources to connect with them as often as possible. Please reach out to your child’s teacher or principal if you have questions or need assistance.

Be well,

JoEtta Gonzales
Dr. JoEtta Gonzales
CGESD Superintendent